

S E C R E T ANKARA 002817

SIPDIS

STATE FOR P, EUR, EUR/SE, NEA AND NEA/NGA

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TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS PTER TU IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQ AND TURKEY: GOT SAYS SHIFTING FOCUS FROM MILITARY PRESENCE TO TRADE AND AID, WANT TO DEVELOP RELATIONS W/IRAQI KURDS, GET TURKMEN TO INTEGRATE

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons: 1.5 (B and D).

¶1. (S) According to MFA Iraq Department Head Kerim Uras (strictly protect), the GOT held a coordination meeting on Iraq policy April 26 at which MFA, TNIO and TGS reps agreed that Turkey should concentrate more on trade with and aid to Iraq, and less on the military issues surrounding the Iraqi border. Uras said there was a broadly shared perception at the meeting that due to Kurdish participation with US forces in OIF, the US was increasingly listening to the Iraqi Kurds and marginalizing the role of Turkey in northern Iraq. He said that while Turkey had been unhappy with Iraqi Kurdish behavior at the time Kirkuk and Mosul fell, things were getting back on track, and the Turks were calm and determined to further develop their relations with the Iraqi Kurds, especially via trade. Uras said the MFA was considering sending a delegation to northern Iraq in the near future (Deputy U/S Ali Tuygan was scheduled to go there April 10 but canceled over developments in Kirkuk).

¶2. (S) On the Iraqi Turkmen, Uras said the meeting assessed that slowly the Iraqi Turkmen Front was getting its act together but had weak leadership. The ITF should become more aware that it must behave as a component of the new Iraq, which required establishing better relations with other local groups and more moderate statements and behavior. Turkey believes the Iraqi Turkmen remain vulnerable. The ITF, he said, is opening 30 offices across Iraq.

¶3. (S) The final issue raised at the meeting, according to Uras, was the continuing PKK/KADEK presence in northern Iraq. The Turks observed that the US had coordinated well with Iran in "crushing" the MEK, and hoped we would do the same with the PKK/KADEK. Uras added that, in his view, we did not need to "crush" the PKK/KADEK, but rather capture them so they could serve short prison terms and be "rehabilitated." Uras also said the US and Turkey should soon discuss how to end the work of the Peace Monitoring Force (PMF). In general, Uras noted, Turkey has been soft on substance regarding Iraq but has talked tough, while the Iranians and Syrians have taken the opposite tact. Turkey, he said, was fed up with having Syria and Iran hide behind Turkey on these issues. He said Turkey would likely be less tough on northern Iraq issues in the near future as it sought to shift to a trade focus in relations with the Kurds there.

PEARSON